(v) MOU with Power Trading Corporation (PTC) for bulk sale of surplus power from existing as well as future units of ONGC.

**Private companies in gas and oil sector**

†92. SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of private gas and oil companies granted permission to operate in various States during the last three years; and

(b) the quantum of revenue Government have earned thereby?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Since, January 2002, Government have signed Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) with 9 private companies for 7 exploration blocks & 2 small size fields in various states. Further, Government have granted permission for operations by two private companies for 2 exploration blocks and 1 discovered field through the assignment route in accordance with the provisions of the relevant PSCs.

(b) In respect of the blocks and fields mentioned in part (a) above, no revenue has flowed as yet to the Central Government.

**Measures to meet growing demand of Natural Gas**

93. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the natural gas is fast emerging as the most preferred fuel in the country;

(b) if so, the quantum of natural gas required by the country to meet the growing demand of natural gas during the coming years;

(c) the steps Government have taken or propose to take to meet the growing demand of natural gas;

(d) whehter a demand has been made to set up a Regulatory Framework for attracting more investments in this sector; and

(e) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, sir.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.